

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. - 22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously presented) A skin conditioner comprising as active ingredients a combination of L-arginine and a compound selected from the group consisting of ethanolamine, 2-methoxyethylamine, O-phosphorylethanolamine, 2-ethylaminoethanol, diethanolamine, 2-dimethylaminoethanol, choline, 2-amino-2-hydroxymethyl-1,3-propanediol, noradrenalin, phenethylamine, ethylenediamine, taurine, phosphatidylethanolamine, N-(2-hydroxyethyl)acetoamide, 2-(methylamino)ethanol, 2-anilinoethanol, 2-(benzylamino)ethanol, 3-amino-1-propanol, 2-amino-1-butanol, putrescine, DL-pyroglutamic acid and triethanolamine.

24. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23, wherein L-arginine and/or the compound originate in a rice preparation.

25. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23, which is obtained by mixing L-arginine and/or the compound with a rice preparation.

26. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23 or 24, wherein the rice preparation is produced by hydrating rice or crushed rice, adding amylase or protease and allowing to react, and adding yeast following completion of the reaction to perform saccharification and fermentation.

27. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23 or 24, wherein the rice preparation is produced by hydrating rice or crushed rice, adding one, two or all of amylase, protease and lipase, heating, and extracting by heating or further repeating these reactions two or more times.

28. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23, wherein L-arginine and/or the compound originates in an animal, plant or microbial preparation.

29. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23, which is obtained by mixing L-arginine and/or the compound with an animal, plant or microbial preparation.

30. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 28 or 29, wherein the animal, plant or microbial preparation is produced by fermenting an animal, plant or microbial substance, or adding a fermenting sugar, followed by fermentation.

31. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 28 or 29, wherein the animal, plant or microbial preparation is produced by adding water, as necessary, to the animal, plant or microbial material, adding one, two or all of amylase, protease and lipase, heating, and extracting by heating or further repeating these reactions two or more times.

32. (Previously presented) A composition for the prevention, prevention of exacerbation or treatment of atopic dermatitis comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

33. (Previously presented) A composition for skin moisturizing comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

34. (Previously presented) A composition for restoration of the skin's barrier mechanism and function comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

35. (Previously presented) A composition for improving the skin's moisture retention ability comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

36. (Previously presented) A composition for conditioning the corneal layer of epidermis comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

37. (Previously presented) A composition for conditioning epidermal keratocytes comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

38. (Previously presented) A composition for conditioning the epidermis comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

39. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23, which further comprises a moisture retention agent.

40. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 39, wherein the moisture retention agent comprises one or more substances selected from the group consisting of polyvalent alcohols selected from the group consisting of glycerin, dipropylene glycol and 1,3-buteneglycol; sugars selected from the group consisting of sorbitol, maltitol, dextrin, hyaluronic acid and chitosan; mucopolysaccharides and sugar derivatives; polypeptides selected from the group consisting of elastin and collagen; organic acids and their salts selected from the group consisting of pyrrolidone carboxylic acid, citric acid and lactic acid and salts thereof; biopharmaceutical and natural moisture retention agents selected from the group consisting of refined rice wine, rice bran, aloe, licorice and chamomile; bio-component moisture retention agents selected from the group consisting of vitamins, placental extract, urea, lecithins, phospholipids, ceramides, cholesterol and sphingolipids; and vegetable extracts, fruit extracts, kelp extracts, enzymes and inorganic salts; and further comprises one or more substances selected from the group consisting of animal oils, vegetable oils, hydrocarbons, higher alcohols and esters.

41. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 23, further comprising a drug and/or base that can be used in externally applied skin preparations in the form of pharmaceuticals, quasi-drugs and cosmetics.

42. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 41, wherein the drug is one or more kinds of substances selected from the group consisting of bactericidal drugs, wound protective agents, wound healing agents, drugs for suppurative diseases, analgesics, anti-itching, astringent and antiphlogistic agents, immunosuppressants, drugs for parasitic skin diseases, skin softeners, hair agents, vitamin agents and biopharmaceuticals, and the base comprises one or more kinds of substances selected from the group consisting of moisture retention agents, astringents, refrigerants, antioxidants, ultraviolet absorbers, infrared dispersants, preservatives, antibiotics, chelating agents, surfactants, foaming agents, stabilizers, penetrants, assistants, pH adjusters, buffers, emulsifiers, opacifiers, fragrances and pigments.

43. (Previously presented) A composition for the prevention and treatment of skin disease selected from the group consisting of atopic dermatitis, dry skin symptoms, pruritis, frostbite, cracking, chapped skin, skin aging symptoms, skin damage caused by ultraviolet rays, darkening, blackening, skin disorders arising in the epidermis, physicochemical skin disorders, skin symptoms caused by the use of water, soap, detergents, surfactants or solvents, adverse side effects of externally applied skin preparations, biological skin disorders, dermatitis and eczema, comprising the skin conditioner of Claim 23.

44. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 43, wherein dry skin symptoms are symptoms selected from atopic skin, dry or rough skin, aged skin, ichthyosis, dry skin, chapped skin, asteatosis, xeroderma, dry eczema, facial dry eczema and progressive volar keratoderma, and/or selected from erythema, sclerosis and cornification, cracking, scaling, wrinkles, itching and dry marks, while skin aging symptoms are selected from wrinkles and decreased skin tightness and elasticity, skin damage caused by ultraviolet rays is selected from spots and freckles, skin disorders arising from the epidermis are selected from turnover abnormalities, fineness and moistness, physicochemical skin disorders are selected from cuts, burns and floor burns, biological skin disorders are selected from athlete's foot and skin infections, and inflammatory cornification disorders are selected from the group consisting of dermatitis and eczema.

45. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 43, wherein the skin disease is skin aging symptoms.

46. (Previously presented) The skin conditioner according to Claim 43, wherein the skin disease is selected from the group consisting of darkening, wrinkles and decreased skin tightness and elasticity, and spots.

47. (Previously presented) Cosmetics, quasi-drugs and
pharmaceuticals comprising the skin conditioner according to Claim 23.

48. - 53 (Cancelled)